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Constituency

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Family and Education

s. of Ralph Vivian of Trevedran in St. Buryan, Cornw. By Joan, wid. of Robert Tresawell. *m.* Joan, da. and coh. of [Stephen Trenewith](#)* of Earth, Cornw. 1s.

Offices Held

Biography

In 1387 the property held by Vivian's father in the parishes of St. Buryan, Kenwyn, Advent and Probus, which was said to be worth £10 8s.4d. a year, was forfeited to the Crown following his indictment for a felony. Whether Adam was ever able to recover it is not known, and he seems to have held land only in the parish of Crantock, at Halwyn and 'Langourrowe', which he leased to [Robert Treage](#)*, and at 'Trewythya' (perhaps Trewithian in Gerrans on the south coast).¹ Although he made a good marriage, for his wife was coheir to substantial estates in Cornwall, he predeceased his father-in-law and, accordingly, never enjoyed possession of her inheritance.

The first recorded incident of Vivian's life was a violent one: according to local reports he was responsible for the murder of John Nicoll at Bodmin on Easter Sunday 1398. However, he was fortunate enough to win a favourable response from Richard II to his petition for mercy, in which he claimed to have been indicted by the malice of his enemies, and on 12 Oct. in the same year he obtained a full pardon. Nothing further is known to his detriment for several years afterwards. Indeed, at the assizes at Launceston in 1405 he acted as an attorney in a plea of *novel disseisin* on behalf of [Sir Henry Ilcombe](#)*, and eight years later he stood bail for two men indicted before the Cornish bench. In 1420 he saw service overseas as a man-at-arms in Lord Botreaux's retinue, which was mustered at Southampton in May, and he probably remained in France for a year, returning home in time for the second Parliament of 1421, to which he was elected as representative for Helston. However, at various times during the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V, Vivian had been summoned to the King's bench charged with felonies, and only shortly before he first entered the Commons he was indicted before the j.p.s in Cornwall for a number of offences committed in the previous five years, including the theft of livestock, crops, jewellery and money, and the capital offence of clipping coins, as well as for his earlier crime of killing John Nicoll. Vivian appeared in the King's bench in 1422, presented a royal pardon he had obtained five years earlier, and was eventually acquitted. The indictments referred to him as living at Headon (in Jacobstow), and as being a 'gentleman'. His status as a member of the gentry was similarly mentioned in 1428, when he appeared in Chancery as a surety for the peace.²

The date of Vivian's death has not been traced. However, it occurred before 1437, when his widow inherited her share of the Trenewith estates. She lived on to enjoy possession for over 20 more years.³

Ref Volumes: 1386-1421

Author: L. S. Woodger

Notes

- [1.](#) Vivian, *Vis. Cornw.* 533; *CIMisc.* iv. 403; *CCR*, 1419-22, p. 41; 1422-9, p. 402.
- [2.](#) *CPR*, 1396-9, p. 417; SC8/252/12559; JUST 1/1518 m. 21d; *CCR*, 1413-19, p. 77; 1422-9, p. 402; E101/49/34; KB27/610 rex m. 11, 626 rex m. 4, 646 rex m. 14.
- [3.](#) *Cornw. Feet of Fines* (Devon and Cornw. Rec. Soc. 1950), 1052, 1118; *CPR*, 1441-6, p. 7.